



MAPLEWOOD MONTESSORI SCHOOL

Sparking the mind and nurturing the spirit SM

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Information / Application

Montessori Method

At the turn of the century, Maria Montessori, Italy's first female surgeon, began working to educate underprivileged children in Rome. A pioneer in education, Dr. Montessori began her work at a clinic where she observed "idiot children". Her observations became the impetus for what we know today as Montessori Method.

Dr. Montessori set out to establish a program for the children incorporating specially designed educational materials to meet what she identified as the needs of children. The University in Rome accepted Dr. Montessori's plans and the program came to life. Much to the surprise of Dr. Montessori's critics, at the end of the year the "idiot children" tested on par or above, "normal" school children. It was this finding that prompted Dr. Montessori's interest to work with "normal" children. If these troubled children could score so well, why weren't less troubled children developing more fully? Dr. Montessori opened the first **Casa Dei Bambini** in 1906. Here children who were not yet of school age and who couldn't be left home alone, were left in the care of a "woman in charge". The caregiver was trained in the Montessori Method and Dr. Montessori checked in as often as her schedule allowed. Soon news of the **Casa Dei Bambini** spread all over the world and people came from near and far to get a glimpse of Maria Montessori and her work.

Dr. Montessori continued to observe children and to explore new teaching techniques. Over the years she refined the materials and methods to meet the educational needs of children at various stages of development.

The Montessori Method adheres to the notions that children have:

- a need to do meaningful and purposeful work
- a heightened capacity for learning and internalizing particular material at particular times
- an interest in manipulating small objects
- a need to freely explore materials and connect to lessons in concrete ways

Montessori believed that by providing an environment prepared to meet these needs during the early years; children are likely to more fully develop their academic, social, and spiritual selves.

Maplewood Montessori School is dedicated to these principles of the Montessori Method.

Montessori Education, What's it all about?

Dr. Maria Montessori believed that education is the work of each individual and that the truly educated continue learning long after the hours and years spent in the classroom. She believed that natural curiosity and a love for knowledge are a best student's motivators; and that these must come from within. Dr. Montessori felt, therefore, that the goal of early childhood education should not be to fill the child with facts from a pre-selected course of studies, but rather to cultivate his/her own natural desire to learn and to encourage children to take responsibility and initiative in their educational experience.

In the Montessori Classroom this objective is approached in two ways: first, by allowing each child to experience the excitement of learning by his/her own choice; and second, by helping to perfect all of his/her natural tools for learning. The Montessori materials have this dual long-range purpose in addition to their immediate purpose of giving specific information to the child.

How Do Children Learn?

The use of the materials is based on the young child's unique aptitude for learning, which Dr. Montessori identified as the "absorbent mind". In her writings, she frequently compared the young mind to a sponge. As the sponge absorbs liquid, so does the child absorb information from his/her environment. The process is particularly evident by the manner in which a two-year-old learns his/her native language. These skills are gained without formal instruction and without the conscious, tedious effort, which an adult must make to master a foreign tongue. Acquiring information in this way is a natural and delightful activity for the young child who employs all of his/her senses to investigate his/her interesting surroundings.

Dr. Montessori reasoned that since the child retains this ability to learn by absorbing until almost seven years of age, a classroom where materials can be chosen, handled, and experimented with best suits his/her needs. Over sixty years of observation and teaching experience supported her theory that a young children learn to read, write, and calculate in much the same natural way that they learn to walk and talk. In a Montessori classroom, the materials become inviting to each child as his/her own period of interest and readiness emerges.

Dr. Montessori emphasized the hand as the chief teacher of the child. In order to learn there must be concentration, and she determined the best way a child can concentrate is by fixing his/her attention on some task he/she is performing with his/her hands. The Montessori materials allow casual impressions to be reinforced as the child participates in concrete experiences using his/her hands in the learning process.

How Important Are The Early Years?

In *The Absorbent Mind*, Dr. Montessori wrote, "The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to age six. For that is the time when man's intelligence itself, his greatest implement is being formed. But not only his intelligence; the full totality of his psychic powers...At no other age has the child greater need of an intelligent help, and any obstacle that impedes his creative work will lessen the chance he has of achieving perfection."

Recent psychological studies based on controlled research have confirmed these theories of Dr. Montessori. After analyzing thousands of such studies, Dr. Benjamin S. Bloom of the University of Chicago, wrote in *Stability and Change in Human Characteristics*, "From conception to age four the individual develops 50% of his mature intelligence; from ages four to eight he develops another 30%... This would suggest the very rapid growth of intelligence in the early years and the possible great influence of the early environment on this development."

What Are "Sensitive Periods"?

Another observation of Dr. Montessori's, that has been reinforced by modern research, is the importance of the sensitive periods for early learning. These are periods of intense fascination for learning a particular lesson or acquiring a skill. It is easier for the child to learn a particular skill during the corresponding sensitive period than at any other time in his/her life. The Montessori classroom takes advantage of this fact by allowing the child freedom to select individual activities, which correspond to the child's own sensitive period.

At What Age Is This Kind of School Appropriate?

Although the entrance age varies, a child usually enters a Montessori classroom between the ages of two and a half and four, depending on when he/she can be happy and comfortable in a classroom setting. The child begins with the simplest exercises based on activities, which all children enjoy. The material he or she uses at three and four will help him/her to develop the concentration, coordination and work habits necessary for the more advanced exercises he/she will perform at five and six. The entire program of learning is purposefully structured. Therefore, optimum results cannot be expected either for a child who misses the early years of the cycle or for one who is withdrawn before he/she finishes the basics described here.

Parents should understand that a Montessori school is neither a child-care service nor a play school that prepares a child for traditional kindergarten. Rather, it is a unique cycle of learning designed to take advantage of the child's sensitive years between three and six, when he/she can absorb information from an enriched environment. A child who acquires the basic skills of reading and arithmetic in this natural way has the advantage of beginning education without drudgery, boredom, or discouragement. By pursuing his/her individual interests in a Montessori classroom, each child gains an early enthusiasm for learning, which is the key to becoming a truly educated person.¹

¹ Adapted from [A Parent's Guide to the Montessori Classroom](#) © 1975

Maplewood's Philosophy

As a community of parents, teachers, and children; we at Maplewood Montessori School believe that the child from three to six years of age is an avid learner; that he/she learns largely through imitation, and in a concrete fashion through the manipulation of real objects. We recognize that the young child has unique capabilities for absorbing information and culture, unparalleled by any other time in his/her life, and that the mind has a remarkable ability to sort and order this information. We utilize the sensitive periods of development described by Dr. Maria Montessori as guidelines in planning our curriculum; these include sensitive periods for the absorption of language, attention to order and detail, movement and refining sensorial perceptions. In addition, we agree that character development at this age is best taught through simple grace and courtesy lessons as children widen their social circle and become active participants in a community beyond family.

We seek to offer children a non-competitive, joyful and healthy learning atmosphere, which is well ordered and sequentially structured according to skill level, and where human relations and social skills are exemplified in such a way that they can be imitated. In the Montessori tradition, we provide children with a rich environment reflecting interest in all areas of life. The classroom is a child-sized world equipped with materials suited specifically to foster the development of three to six year olds and covers the following curriculum areas:

Practical Life Curriculum - Here exercises are real life tasks such as food preparation, dusting, sweeping, pouring, measuring, buttoning, zipping, and stringing that foster the development of concentration, coordination, independence, and order.

Sensorial Curriculum - Sensorial materials enable the children to develop their senses and refine their perceptions.

Language Curriculum - Language lessons provide for vocabulary development, writing skills, and pre-reading and reading skills.

Math Curriculum - Math Materials allow the child to explore mathematical concepts in a concrete manner, appropriate to his/her own development and interest.

Cultural Studies - Geography, history, social studies, science, music and art are presented in short concrete lessons that allow the children to explore and connect with the world around them.

In addition to these traditional areas of the Primary Montessori classroom, we also provide the children with opportunities for creative play and outdoor activities.

It is important to note that the teachers at Maplewood work to strike a balance between the freedom of the children to make their own work choices and the direction of the teacher to introduce lessons and materials at appropriate times. Our program is one that respects and stresses freedom of choice. We firmly believe that the curiosity and individuality of each child must be encouraged and protected.

In addition to setting academic goals for children and supporting the development of learning skills, we strive to encourage the development of a strong sense of self and social responsibility. Following their own inner quest for learning and given the opportunity for concrete learning experiences, the children develop a joyful fascination and love for learning. They learn to care for others and to work comfortably within a group, to take responsibility for their own work, to use their senses accurately, to be self-motivated and to enjoy the process, not just work toward an end. We recognize these skills as pre-requisites to a successful and healthy academic life.

Each child is considered to be a unique and beautiful individual with his/her own special talents and interests. We believe that each child has his/her own natural timetable of development. Individual differences are supported and encouraged; each child's path through the classroom and experience at Maplewood will accordingly be different. The mixed age setting allows children to work at their own pace without feeling pressure to perform and affords children the opportunity to learn family and real world skills, by working with children both older and younger than themselves.

Our program is intended to be a three to four year program for each child. Parents considering a Montessori education for their child(ren) should be committed to the philosophy and continue enrollment through the kindergarten year. Ideally, children enter a Primary classroom between two and a half and three years of age; and leave as they demonstrate a readiness to transition from the concrete to the more abstract, and have less need for frequent movement. This developmental change generally takes place between the ages of six and seven at which time the children transition into (often more traditional) classroom settings at the first grade level.

In addition, the three to four year program enables each child to form significant relationships with adults other than family members at a time when he/she is naturally inclined toward social interaction. It is our hope that the teachers will become figures offering support and enrichment to each family's life.

Morning sessions run from 8:30 to 11:30, and are available Monday through Thursday; parents may choose to enroll children for three or four mornings a week. Maplewood's extended day program is intended for children who have had a year of experience in the classroom; this option extends the day until 2:30, and is available Monday through Thursday.

Maplewood Montessori School was founded in response to the needs and philosophical desires of Greater Portland parents and is under the direction of Meagan McLaughlin-Cadorette.

Maplewood Montessori Staff

Meagan McLaughlin—Cadorette

Meagan is the Administrator and Head Teacher Maplewood Montessori School. She received her Montessori Teacher Training and AMS Certification through Northeast Montessori Institute; an American Montessori Society accredited Teacher Training Program. As an undergraduate at the University of Maine, she studied Psychology with emphasis on Child Development and Educational Psychology. During her time at the University of Maine, she was introduced to the work of Dr. Montessori and became impassioned by her work. She continues to attend seminars regularly and study Montessori's work and writings. She has been teaching in a Montessori setting since 1993 and continues to enjoy the never-ending process of fully developing a classroom and the curriculum. In her spare time Meagan enjoys spending time in Boothbay, gardening, reading, cooking, playing tennis and enjoying the company of family and friends. Meagan and her husband, reside in Portland with their daughter.

Jennifer Moore

Jennifer is an Assistant Teacher at Maplewood. Jenn joined the Maplewood staff in the fall of 2003. She attended the University of Maine, Presque Isle where she studied Criminal Justice and elected to return to Southern Maine to work with young children. Jenn completed a Montessori Assistant Teacher Training Program in July of 2003 and an Advanced Assistant Teacher Training Program in 2004. In her free time, Jenn enjoys swimming, hiking, skiing and spending time with her family.

Pamela Weiss

Pamela is an Assistant Teacher at Maplewood; she joined the Maplewood staff in the fall of 2006.

Admissions and Tuition Information

Admissions Process

1. **Request Information Packet**

Maplewood's information packet includes general information on Montessori philosophy, Maplewood's philosophy and programs, staff, tuition schedules, and an application. Packets may be obtained immediately via our website or by calling 207-772-2833 to add your family to our next mailing (mailings are sent quarterly).

2. **Parent Visit**

The best way for parents to learn more about Maplewood and decide whether it is right for your child is to come and visit. Open Houses provide opportunities for parents to visit the classroom and chat with staff. After meeting us and seeing our space, if you would like to observe during school hours, you are welcome! Please call or email to schedule an observation.

3. **Application**

Upon receipt of the completed application and the \$25 processing fee, a file will be created for your child, and he/she will be placed in the queue for new students.

4. **Child Visit**

After reviewing your child's application, we will contact you to schedule a child visit. This visit is an important part of the admissions process as it provides the opportunity for teachers and prospective students to meet in the classroom. We make every effort to ensure that each child's experience at Maplewood is joyful and fulfilling. As part of that commitment, we as teachers and parents begin our relationship of working together by taking care to see that the classroom is an appropriate match for each child's needs.

5. **Enrollment / Registration**

As a final step in the admissions process, you will be contacted by the directress welcoming your child to the Maplewood community. A registration worksheet and tuition contract will also be forwarded to you. Upon receipt of the signed contract and your initial tuition installment, a space in the classroom will be reserved for your child.

6. **Schedule Confirmation**

After your child's enrollment/registration has been processed, and the classroom's schedule is finalized, you will receive confirmation indicating which of your schedule choices (first or second) was available.

Schedule

Maplewood Montessori School offers three or four morning schedules for children attending their first year of pre-school. Children who have experience in school or who demonstrate readiness may enroll in the extended day program. Four full days is the recommended schedule for kindergarten students. Flexible scheduling allows parents to choose days that best meet the needs of their family.

Hours of Operation

Morning Sessions – 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Monday through Thursday

Extended Day Sessions – until 2:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday

Tuition*

Maplewood offers two options for tuition payment: Prepayment of your child's annual tuition due April 1st, or a tuition payment plan. Please contact Maplewood Montessori School for more information.

Morning Sessions

3 morning sessions per week – \$3300 per academic year (September through mid June)

4 morning sessions per week – \$3800 per academic year (September through mid June)

Extended Day

Extend 1 morning – Add \$1700 per academic year (September through mid June)

Extend 2 mornings – Add \$2200 per academic year (September through mid June)

Extend 3 mornings – Add \$2600 per academic year (September through mid June)

Extend 4 mornings – Add \$3100 per academic year (September through mid June)

Mid-year Additions

Schedule additions may be made in January, provided that spaces are available. Tuition is due December 15th. If you would like to make a mid-year addition, please request a schedule change form at the beginning of December.

Each morning session – \$650

Each extended day – \$650

Fees and Deposits*

Upon Application

A non-refundable \$25 processing fee is due upon submission of an application.

Upon Enrollment / Registration

The first installment of tuition is due to reserve a place for your child. All tuition payments are non-refundable.

*Please Note

Tuition, Fee and Deposit amounts are subject to change.

Child Information and Application Form

Child's Full Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____
Address and Phone _____

Father's Name: _____ Occupation: _____
Work Address and Phone _____

Mother's Name: _____ Occupation: _____
Work Address and Phone: _____

Family e-mail address: _____

Child's siblings and their ages: _____

To whom may we release your child (We will require notification to dismiss your child with anyone not listed below.):

1. _____ 2. _____

Persons to notify in the event of an emergency - if parents are unable to be reached (Please include phone numbers):

1. _____

2. _____

Child's Doctor and Phone number: _____

Allergies (known or suspected): _____

Medical Conditions we should be advised of: _____

Is your child adopted: Yes / No

Are child's parents separated or divorced: Yes / No

Does your child have an afternoon sitter or daycare provider: [] Yes / [] No

If yes, Name, Address and Phone: _____

Has your child attended any program previously: _____

Why do you wish to enter your child in a Montessori program: _____

How did you hear about Maplewood Montessori School: _____

In order that we may prepare an environment that will meet the individual needs of your child, please supply the following information:

Child's special interests: _____

Have birth, sex education, and / or death been presented to your child in a manner that you would like us to know about? Are you concerned with how these issues might be dealt with at school: _____

What methods of discipline do you use? Under what circumstances does your child require discipline at home: _____

Observance of holidays and religious background: _____

Describe briefly your child's daily schedule: _____

How often does your child play with other children: _____

Does your child watch television? If so, how many hours of television does your child watch each day? What shows does your child find particularly interesting: _____

How often does your child have the opportunity for outdoor play: _____

Does your child have any special needs that we should be aware of? (temperament, anxieties, motor difficulties, developmental delays, physical restrictions, etc.) If so, have you and your child been working with professionals/therapists: _____

What are your plans for kindergarten: _____

The information we have provided on this application is truthful, accurate, and complete. We understand that withholding information or providing inaccurate information about our child may jeopardize his/her application, and if enrolled may result in his/her dismissal from school.

Name of Parent/Guardian	Signature	Date
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Name of Parent/Guardian	Signature	Date
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Please mail all application forms to:
Maplewood Montessori School
205 Woodford Street
Portland, ME 04103

Please Note: A \$25 non-refundable application fee is required with submission of this form.